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GOVERNORS' MESSAGES

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1874-1891

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JOHN IRELAND.

GOVERNOR OF TEXAS, JANUARY 16, 1883, UNTIL JANUARY 18, 1887.

John Ireland was born of Irish parentage in Hart county, Ky., on January 1, 1827. His father, Patrick Ireland, and mother, whose maiden name was Rachel Newton, were also natives of Kentucky.

His opportunities for getting an education were very meager, but he extracted from them the full limit of their possibilities, and at an early age began to show the signs of indomitable perseverance which was such a marked character of his later days. He went to school at such modest institutions as were in the neighborhood of his home until he was sixteen, when he went to Munfordsville, where he lived from 1847 to 1850. During this time he was a deputy sheriff. The next two years were spent at Elizabethtown, and then he returned to Munfordsville, where he studied law until December, 1852. So close was his application, and so rapid his advancement in his law studies that he was admitted to practice within a year of the time he began studying.

With a limited knowledge of the law as his only capital he came to Texas, arriving at Galveston in January, 1853. He went directly to San Antonio and remained there until April of the same year, when he moved to Seguin, which was his home until he died.

In 1858 he held his first office, having been elected mayor of Seguin. In 1861 he was elected by the people of Guadalupe county to represent them in the convention which adopted the secession ordinance.

As soon as it was determined that Texas should secede, John Ireland enlisted as a private in the volunteer army of the Confederacy. He was elected captain, major, and lieutenant colonel, and though his company saw scarcely any service, he was considered a very efficient officer.

At the close of the war he returned to Seguin and resumed the practice of law. In 1866, when the convention was called to form a new constitution in accordance with the reconstruction policy of President Johnson, John Ireland was elected to represent the counties of Travis, Williamson, Burnet, Blanco, Hays, Guadalupe, Caldwell and Bastrop.

Soon after the constitutional convention, he was elected judge of his judicial district, but he was removed upon the usurpation of the Federal military. In 1873 he served as a member of the House in the Thirteenth Legislature, and as a member of the Senate in the succeeding Legislature. In 1875 he was appointed Associate Justice

of the Supreme Court, but was retired by the new constitution in 1876, which required the court to consist of only three judges.

Though his term on the Supreme Bench was limited, he rendered many opinions which were marked by a careful research and a clear, concise exposition. His opinion settled the principle in Texas jurisprudence that real estate cannot pass by virtue of a nuncupative will, a custom in vogue to a considerable extent at that time.

In 1878 he was a candidate for Congress from his district, which was at that time the Sixth. His foremost rival was Gustave Schleicher. The contest was a very stubborn one, and after the convention, which was held in San Antonio, had balloted for several days without any sign of being able to agree, it was agreed that the people should settle the question at the polls. In the election that followed, he was defeated by Mr. Schleicher.

In 1880 John Ireland was elected a delegate-at-large to the Cincinnati convention which nominated Hancock, the Democratic candidate, for President. His colleagues were Gov. Hubbard, Gov. Throckmorton and Col. Jack.

In 1882 he was elected Governor of the State, and was re-elected in 1884 by a majority of 100,000, which was at that time the largest majority ever received by a candidate for Governor. It was during the last of his first term that the "free grass" question became so prominent in Texas politics. The crusade against wire fences, an exciting episode of Texas history, was begun about this time. Gov. Ireland at once adopted a decisive course for its suppression. He convoked the Legislature in January, 1884, and urged the adoption of stringent laws. His recommendation was adopted, and he began at once a vigorous execution of the new law, which soon resulted in the suppression of this kind of lawlessness.

In 1866 Gov. Ireland was a candidate for United States Senator. His rivals were Judge John H. Reagan, at that time a member of Congress, and A. W. Terrell, who later was minister to Turkey. After balloting for more than a week, Judge Reagan was elected.

Gov. Ireland was twice married. His first wife was Mrs. Faircloth, nee Wicks. He was married the second time, May 21, 1857, to Miss Anna M. Penn. She was a native of Virginia, and was remotely related to William Penn of historic renown. She died in Austin May 28, 1911, and was buried at Seguin, her home town.

Gov. Ireland, while visiting in San Antonio, was stricken with heart neuralgia which caused his death two weeks later, March 15, 1896. The body was taken from San Antonio to Austin, where it was buried in the State cemetery.

Gov. Ireland had a pleasing personality to those who knew him well. He was a man of strong convictions and was apt to make enemies by the vigor with which he pursued his course. This trait was conspicuous during the pendency of the legislation making large grants of land to railroad companies. He opposed the measures vehemently, and for his reward acquired the title of "Ox-Cart John." However, his integrity of motive was never doubted and if he did not win the friendship of all, he at least retained their respect.

LAWRENCE SULLIVAN ROSS.

GOVERNOR OF TEXAS, JANUARY 17, 1887, UNTIL JANUARY 20, 1891.

Governor Lawrence Sullivan Ross was born at Bentonsport, Ia., September 27, 1838. His father, Capt. Shapley P. Ross, and his mother, Catherine H. Ross of Virginia, were married in Missouri and came to Texas in 1839. They came directly to the then Indian village of Waco, where Capt. Ross was Indian agent.

Lawrence Sullivan Ross was educated at the Florence Wesleyan University in Alabama, and graduated in 1859 with distinction. His boyhood in the intervals between the sessions of his university were spent in actual service against the Comanches on the frontier of Texas. In a fierce battle with the Comanches, the "boy captian" was dangerously wounded by a rifle ball through his arm and side. When he was able to travel he returned to his alma mater and graduated the next summer.

When he returned to Texas in 1859, Governor Houston, the immortal, put him, boy and all as he was, in supreme command on the frontier, and well did he ratify the clear judgment of the Governor. In one engagement with the Comanches, Capt. Ross rescued Cynthia Ann Parker, who had been a captive for thirty years. In this battle, Chief Peta Nocona was killed by Capt. Ross in a single hand to hand combat. After these signal victories over the Indians, Major General Winfield Scott wrote him an autograph letter offering him, as young as he was, a commission in the United States army.

When the war between the North and South commenced, Lawrence Sullivan Ross enlisted as a private. He was soon made major of the regiment to which his company was attached. He rose rapidly to the rank of lieutenant colonel, then colonel, and in the fall of 1862 was made a brigadier general in the Confederate army. General Dabney H. Maurey, in response to a letter from Mr. Seddon, Secretary of War in the Confederate cabinet, asking him to furnish to the department the name of the man who displayed the most distinguished gallantry at the battle of Corinth, sent the name of L. S. Ross, and hence he has always been called in the South, "the hero of Corinth."

At the close of the war he returned home without a dollar, and engaged in farming with such success that he soon purchased a small plantation in the Brazos bottom, where he raised and educated his family. In 1873, during a time when the criminal classes were in the ascendent, the law-abiding citizens of his county selected him for sheriff, which office he successfully filled for a term of two years.

In 1875 he was elected a delegate to the constitutional convention and served faithfully in that body. In 1881 he was elected to the State Senate and served there with equal distinction. In 1886 he was nominated for governor, and in November of that year was elected. During his two terms as governor, the State experienced unexampled peace, progress and prosperity. Early in 1891, Gov. Hogg appointed him president of the Agricultural & Mechanical College at Bryan. In 1895, Gov. Culberson offered him the position of railroad commissioner which he accepted, but the news of his contemplated removal from the college aroused so much opposition among his friends and the patrons of the college, that he reconsidered and declined the tender. He continued as president of the Agricultural & Mechanical College until his death, January 3, 1898.

RICHARD B. HUBBARD.

Governor of Texas, Dec. 1, 1876—Jan. 21, 1879.

Richard B. Hubbard was born in Georgia in 1832. At the age of eighteen he graduated from Mercer University, then took the law course at the University of Virginia and at Harvard. In 1853 he came to Texas and settled in Tyler. In 1856 he was a member of the National Democratic Convention. During the same year he was appointed United States district attorney, which office he later resigned to become a representative for his district in the legislature of 1858. When the Civil War broke out he commanded the twenty-second regiment of Texas infantry, and was promoted later to the command of a brigade. In 1872 he was an elector on the Greeley ticket. In 1873, he was nominated for Lieutenant Governor. When Governor Coke resigned, Dec. 1, 1876, Lieutenant Governor Hubbard, by virtue of his office, became Governor, which office he held for the remainder of the unexpired term, then was re-elected for another term of two years, or until Jan. 21, 1879, when he was succeeded by Governor O. M. Roberts. Governor Hubbard was often referred to as the "Demosthenes of Texas," and during the campaign of 1884, he was one of the most magnetic and influential speakers. In 1885, he was appointed by President Cleveland minister plenipotentiary to Japan, and after his return to the United States he published a book on Japan. He died at his home in Tyler, Texas, July 13, 1901.

Note.—The messages of Governor Hubbard were to the Regular Session of the Sixteenth Legislature.